2019 Annual Water Quality Report

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(L) Burlington's elevated water storage tank, located on the UVM campus
(R) Workers prepare to install an extension of the 24" raw water intake pipe, circa 1894

Burlington Water Resources

A Division of Burlington Public Works

18 year member of

We are pleased to present to you our annual water quality report. After many years supplying this information on a tri-fold brochure, last year we migrated to a letter format which gives us unlimited real estate for both required data and Water Resources news. Since 1867, we've been working hard to provide you with the best possible drinking water. This report is a snapshot of the quality of water that we provided in 2019. Included are the details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state standards. We are committed to providing you with information because informed customers are our best allies.

Where Does My Water Come From?

We are fortunate in Burlington to have Lake Champlain as a raw water source. This 12th largest lake in the continental United States provides drinking water for nearly 200,000 people – and recreational opportunities for many, many more. While the high quality of water in the lake makes our drinking water treatment process relatively easy, there are a variety of threats to water quality in the lake. One of the physical characteristics of Lake Champlain that automatically puts it at a disadvantage compared to the Great Lakes is the ratio of watershed size to surface area. Our lake has a Watershed-to-Water ratio of nearly 19 to 1 compared to the Great Lakes' 3 to 1 ratio. That means what we do on the land that drains to Lake Champlain has a potentially greater impact than similar land development in the Great Lakes watersheds. In 2017 we updated our Source Water Protection Plan (available for review upon request) that identifies actual or potential sources of contamination within the watershed plus includes a general plan to specifically address those threats.

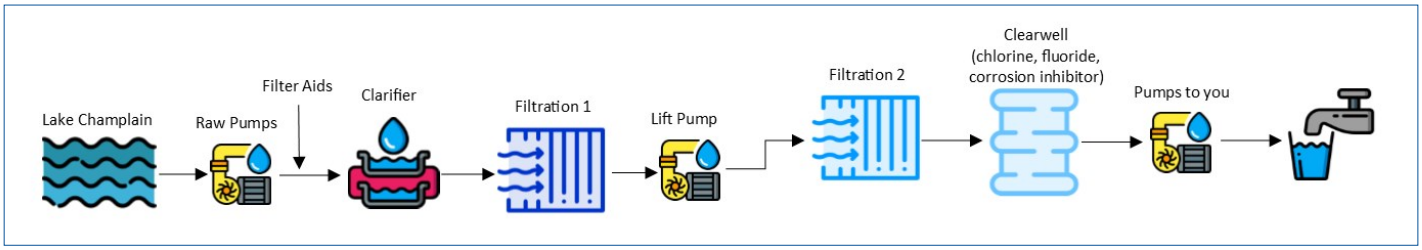
LAKE CHAMPLAIN BY THE NUMBERS	
Water Surface Area	435 square miles
Length	120 miles
Width (at widest point)	12 miles
Average Depth	64 feet
Watershed Size	8,234 square miles

The City of Burlington faces a variety of challenges when it comes to the stewardship of our lake – including a number of State and Federal regulatory requirements. In late 2014, Burlington was one of only 5 communities across the country selected by the EPA to receive technical assistance and funding to develop an Integrated Water Quality Plan. Integrated Planning allows communities to examine all of their regulatory and environmental challenges, and prioritize improvements based on what will provide the most efficient benefits up front. To learn more about Burlington's Integrated Planning process, visit www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/Stormwater/IMSWP

Beyond the Integrated Planning work, we are undertaking a number of capital improvements thanks to the $30 million bond Burlington residents approved in the fall of 2018. For more information on that work, please visit www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/CWRP

How is My Water Processed?

We filter water twice before sending it out to you. Raw lake water is pumped into our plant where we add filter aids to help remove both dissolved and particulate matter from lake water. We then start removing large particles through gravity settling in clarifiers, filter water once through anthracite coal and again through sand. We then add chlorine to inactivate any harmful bacteria or viruses that may possibly have made it through our process and to keep them out of the distribution system, fluoride to prevent tooth decay and lastly a corrosion inhibitor to keep lead and copper in household plumbing from leaching into the water you drink.



What Else Are We Doing?

This has been another busy year for capital projects. While we performed maintenance and repairs to filtration process 1, the vast majority of our work was done out in our distribution system. Through a collaborative effort between our distribution crews and private contractors, in 2019 we relined 1.8 miles and replaced 0.21 miles of water mains. We appreciate your support and patience as we continue this work in 2020 and beyond.

Drinking Water Contaminant Definitions and Data

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include surface water (streams, lakes) and ground water (wells, springs). As water travels over the land's surface or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals. It also picks up substances resulting from the presence of animals and human activity. Some "contaminants" may be harmful. Others, such as iron and sulfur, are not harmful. Public water systems treat water to remove contaminants, if any are present.

In order to ensure that your water is safe to drink, we test it regularly according to regulations established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Vermont. These regulations limit the amount of various contaminants:

- **Microbial contaminants**, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations and wildlife.
- **Inorganic contaminants**, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban storm water runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining or farming.
- **Pesticides and herbicides**, may come from a variety of sources such as storm water run-off, agriculture, and residential users.
- **Radioactive contaminants**, which can be naturally occurring or the result of mining activity
- **Organic contaminants**, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and also come from gas stations, urban storm water run-off, and septic systems.

Terms and Abbreviations

The following tables may include terms you're unfamiliar with. To help you better understand these terms we have provided the following definitions:

Action Level (AL): The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

Level 1 Assessment: A level 1 Assessment is a study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system.

Level 2 Assessment: A Level 2 Assessment is a very detailed study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why an E. coli MCL violation has occurred and/or why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system on multiple occasions.

Locational Running Annual Average (LRAA): The average of sample analytical results for samples taken at a particular monitoring location during four consecutive calendar quarters.

Maximum Contamination Level (MCL): The "Maximum Allowed" MCL is the highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCL's are set as close to the MCLG's as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Maximum Contamination Level Goal (MCLG): The "Goal" is the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to human health. MCLG's allow for a margin of safety.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level (MRDL): The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. Addition a disinfectant may help control microbial contaminants.

Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG): The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of disinfectants in controlling microbial contaminants.

Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU): NTU is a measure of the clarity of water. Turbidity in excess of 5 NTU is just noticeable to the average person.

Parts per million (ppm) or Milligrams per liter (mg/l): (one penny in ten thousand dollars)

Parts per billion (ppb) or Micrograms per liter (ug/l): (one penny in ten million dollars)

Parts per trillion (ppt) or Nanograms per liter (ng/l): (one penny in ten billion dollars)

Picocuries per liter (pCi/L): a measure of radioactivity in water

Primary and Secondary Drinking Water Standards: Primary standards are established to protect the public against consumption of drinking water contaminants that present a risk to human health, while secondary standards are developed to assist public water systems in managing their drinking water for aesthetic considerations such as taste, color, and odor. Secondary standards have a Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) which are general guidelines that are not enforceable.

Running Annual Average (RAA): The average of 4 consecutive quarters (when on quarterly monitoring); values in table represent the highest RAA for the year.

Treatment Technique (TT): A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.
90th Percentile: Ninety percent of the samples are below the action level. (Nine of ten sites sampled were at or below this level).

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS): a group of over 4,000 human-made chemicals (they do not occur naturally) that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide. More on these compounds are later in this report.

The following tables list all the drinking water contaminants that we detected during the past year. It also includes the date and results of any contaminants that we detected within the past five years if tested less than once a year. **The presence of these contaminants in the water does not necessarily show that the water poses a health risk.**

Detected Primary Drinking Water Contaminants—Burlington Water

Disinfection Residual	RAA	RANGE	Unit	MRDL	MRDLG	Typical Source
Chlorine	0.974	0.000 - 2.030	mg/l	4	4	Water additive to control microbes

Chemical Contaminants	Collection Date	Highest Value	Range	Unit	MCL	MCLG	Typical Source
Fluoride	09/06/2019	0.64	0 - 0.64	ppm	4	4	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive which promotes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories
Nitrate	01/10/2019	0.24	0.24 - 0.24	ppm	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits

Disinfection Byroducts	Collection Year	Highest LRAA	Range	Unit	MCL*	MCLG	Typical Source
Total Trihalomethanes	2019	60	34 - 69	ppb	80	0	By-product of drinking water chlorination
Total Haloacetic Acids (HAA5)	2019	45	3 - 65	ppb	60	0	By-product of drinking water chlorination

*** This MCL is compared against the LRAA and not instantaneous values for determination of compliance. These byproducts of chlorination were the only chemicals detected in 150 volatile and synthetic organic compounds analyzed.**

Lead and Copper	Collection Year	90th Percentile	Range	Unit	AL*	Sites Over AL	Typical Source
Lead	2018	2.7	0 - 118	ppb	15	1	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Copper	2018	0.13	0 - 0.33	ppm	1.3	0	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives

***The lead and copper AL (Action Level) exceedance is based on the 90th percentile concentration, not the highest detected result. This sampling occurs every three (3) years.**

Detected Secondary Drinking Water Contaminants – Burlington Water

Secondary standards are developed to assist public water systems in managing their drinking water for aesthetic considerations such as taste, color, and odor. Secondary standards have a Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (SMCL) which are general guidelines that are not enforceable.

Contaminant	Detected Value	SMCL	Comments
Alkalinity, Total	45 ppm	None	Alkalinity is the capacity of water to resist changes in pH.
Aluminum	0.084 ppm	0.2 ppm	Source is most likely from one of the filtration aids we need to use.
Calcium	18 ppm	None	Naturally occurring in surface and ground waters. See Hardness.
Chloride	21 ppm	250 ppm	Primary source in Lake Champlain is from salt used in the winter to keep our roads and sidewalks clear.
Conductivity	194 µS	None	Compounds like metals and chloride make water more conductive.
Hardness as CaCo3	64 ppm or 3.5 grains / gal	None	Composed of dissolved calcium and magnesium. "Hard" water is considered between 151 – 300 mg/l and can stain clothes and fixtures plus make soaps/detergents difficult to lather.
Magnesium	4.6 ppm	None	Naturally occurring in surface and ground waters. See Hardness.
Residue, total filterable	108 ppm	None	Source is the corrosion inhibitor (zinc orthophosphate) we use to keep lead and copper under control at individual
Sodium	14 ppm	None	Found in water disinfectant and may come from salt use on roads.
Zinc	0.34 ppm	5 ppm	Found in corrosion inhibitor used to control lead & copper.

Monitoring Data for Radioactive Contaminants

Our water system has sampled for naturally occurring radioactive contaminants, per U.S. EPA requirements.

Radioactive Contaminant	Result	Comments
COMBINED RADIUM (-226 & -228)	None Detected	Naturally occurring in some areas
GROSS ALPHA PARTICLE ACTIVITY	None Detected	Naturally occurring in some areas
RADIUM-226	None Detected	Naturally occurring in some areas
RADIUM-228	None Detected	Naturally occurring in some areas

Monitoring Data for Microbial Contaminants

Eight hundred and twenty-two (822) monthly, construction plus water main break samples were analyzed for Total Coliform and *E. Coli* in 2019. None were detected from any samples.

Health Information Regarding Drinking Water

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants, can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline.

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. Burlington DPW's Water Resources Division is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in home and business plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your drinking water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

PFAS Information

What are PFAS?

PFAS are a group of over 4,000 human-made chemicals (they do not occur naturally) that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since at least the 1950s. These chemicals are used to make household and commercial products that resist heat and chemical reactions and repel oil, stains, grease, and water. Some common products that may contain PFAS include non-stick cookware, water-resistant clothing and materials, cleaning products, cosmetics, food packaging materials, and some personal care products. Due to their resilient chemical nature, they don't readily degrade once they are released into the environment. In addition, the common use of these chemicals in industry and consumer products has led to their widespread impact on the environment. The impact of these chemicals on your drinking water continues to be studied.

Why are PFAS being tested in my drinking water?

In May 2019, Act 21 (S.49), an act relating to the regulation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking and surface waters, was signed by Governor Scott. This Act provides a comprehensive framework to identify PFAS contamination and to issue new rules to regulate PFAS levels in drinking water.

What if PFAS have been detected in my drinking water?

Act 21 set an interim standard for the detected concentration of five PFAS in drinking water, or the combined concentration of any of the 5 PFAS, which should not exceed **20 parts per trillion (ppt).** The interim standard is based on the Health Advisory established by the Vermont Department of Health. The five PFAS with results from a 10/3/19 sampling are shown below. Detection limit of analytical instruments are typically around 2 ppt.

(PFNA): Perfluorononanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFOA): Perfluorooctanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFOS): Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFHpA): Perfluoroheptanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFHxS): Perfluorohexane Sulfonic Acid	**None Detected**

If your water has been tested and the **sum any of the five PFAS listed above is confirmed to exceed 20 ppt**, a Do Not Drink notice will be issued informing you not to use your water for drinking or cooking, brushing teeth, making ice cubes, making baby formula, washing fruits and vegetables or any other consumptive use. You will be advised to use another source of water for consumption which may include bottled water.

An additional 13 PFAS were required to be tested for, per Act 21. These additional 13 PFAS, listed below, currently do not have an established health-based standard and are not counted toward the combined standard of 20 ppt:

(11Cl-PF3OUdS): 11-Chloroeicosafluoro-3-oxaundecane-1-sulfonic Acid	**None Detected**
(9Cl-PF3ONS): 9-Chlorohexadecafluoro-3-oxanonane-1-sulfonic Acid	**None Detected**
(DONA): 4,8-Dioxa-3H-perfluorononanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(HFPO-DA): Hexafluoropropylene Oxide Dimer Acid	**None Detected**
(NEtFOSAA): N-ethyl perfluorooctanesulfonamidoacetic Acid	**None Detected**
(NMeFOSAA): N-methyl perfluorooctanesulfonamidoacetic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFBS): Perfluorobutane Sulfonic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFDA): Perfluorodecanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFDoA): Perfluorododecanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFHxA): Perfluorohexanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFTA): Perfluorotetradecanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFTrDA): Perfluorotridecanoic Acid	**None Detected**
(PFUnA): Perfluoroundecanoic Acid	**None Detected**

Where can I learn more about PFAS in drinking water?

For information about the health effects of PFAS, please visit www.healthvermont.gov/water/pfas or call the Vermont Department of Health at 1-800-439-8550. If you have specific health concerns, contact your health care provider.

If you have any questions or comments on this report, or would like to request a hard copy, please contact us at (802) 863-4501 or water-resources@burlingtonvt.gov.
You can also learn more about Burlington's Water Resources Division by visiting us on the web, at: www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/water.

If you want to receive notifications about critical, time-sensitive events in Burlington, please sign up for a VT-Alert account by visiting: www.burlingtonvt.gov/BTV-Alerts. This page will guide you through creating an account, choosing categories of interest, and prioritizing contact options to ensure you are getting the most relevant information as soon as possible.